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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-WK//  
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COMDTNOTE 6200

SUBJ: WEST NILE VIRUS INFORMATION AND PREVENTION

1. WEST NILE VIRUS IS AN EMERGING DISEASE THAT WAS FIRST SEEN IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1999. THIS YEAR, AS OF 23 AUG 02, THE VIRUS HAS CAUSED HUMAN DISEASE IN 20 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND HAS BEEN ISOLATED FROM ANIMALS OR MOSQUITOES IN ALL STATES EAST OF THE ROCKIES.

2. MOST PEOPLE INFECTED HAVE NO SYMPTOMS OR EXPERIENCE A MILD ILLNESS CAUSING FEVER, HEADACHE, BODY ACHES AND OFTEN A SKIN RASH AND SWOLLEN LYMPH GLANDS. MORE SERIOUS INFECTIONS CAUSE ENCEPHALITIS (INFLAMMATION OF THE BRAIN) OR MENINGITIS (INFLAMMATION OF THE LINING OF THE BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD), WITH RAPID ONSET OF HIGH FEVER, NECK STIFFNESS, STUPOR, DISORIENTATION, TREMORS, MUSCLE WEAKNESS, CONVULSIONS, PARALYSIS, COMA, AND RARELY, DEATH. PERSONS OVER 50 HAVE THE HIGHEST RISK OF SEVERE DISEASE. YOUNG CHILDREN AND THOSE WITH SUPPRESSED IMMUNE SYMPTOMS ARE ALSO MORE SUSCEPTIBLE. WEST NILE VIRUS CANNOT BE SPREAD DIRECTLY FROM PERSON TO PERSON OR ANIMAL TO PERSON.

3. THE DISEASE IS CAUSED BY THE BITE OF AN INFECTED MOSQUITO. SINCE MOSQUITOES BREED IN STANDING WATER, THE PRIMARY METHOD TO REDUCE MOSQUITO POPULATIONS IS TO REMOVE STANDING WATER AROUND HOMES AND BUILDINGS. CHECK FOR ANY ITEM OR AREA THAT CAN HOLD WATER, INCLUDING PLANTERS, FLOWERPOTS, CLOGGED GUTTERS, DISCARDED TIRES, WHEELBARROWS, ETC. REMOVE THE ITEMS, DRILL HOLES IN THEM, OR TURN THEM OVER TO PREVENT WATER ACCUMULATION. CHANGE WATER IN WADING POOLS AND BIRD BATHS EVERY 3-4 DAYS. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORS TO TAKE THE SAME PRECAUTIONS.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES INCLUDE: STAY INDOORS AT DAWN, DUSK, AVOID AREAS WITH WEEDS, TALL GRASS OR BUSHES, WEAR LONG SLEEVED SHIRTS AND LONG PANTS WHEN OUTDOORS, SPRAY CLOTHING WITH REPELLENTS CONTAINING PERMETHRIN (NSN 6840-01-278-1336), INSTALL OR REPAIR WINDOW AND DOOR SCREENS, AND APPLY INSECT REPELLENT CONTAINING DEET (N,N-DIETHYL-META-TOLUIMIDE) TO EXPOSED SKIN ACCORDING TO MANUFACTURERS DIRECTIONS. REAPPLY INSECT REPELLENT AS DIRECTED BY MANUFACTURER AND AFTER SWIMMING OR HEAVY PERSPIRATION. THE MOST EFFECTIVE INSECT REPELLENT FOR ADULTS CONTAINS 35 PERCENT DEET (NSN 6840-01-284-3982). HIGHER CONCENTRATIONS AFFORD NO ADDITIONAL PROTECTION. REPELLENTS USED ON CHILDREN (AGED 2-12) SHOULD NOT CONTAIN MORE THAN 10 PERCENT DEET. REPELLENTS MAY IRRITATE THE EYES AND MOUTH, SO AVOID APPLYING REPELLENT TO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN. FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TWO, CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN. INSECT REPELLENTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE

FROM CAMPING AND DRUG STORES. ELECTROMAGNETIC AND ULTRASONIC DEVICES AND VITAMIN B ARE NOT EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING MOSQUITO BITES. MOSQUITOES IN THE UNITED STATES ALSO TRANSMIT OTHER DISEASES SUCH AS EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS, ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS, AND DENGUE FEVER. THE PREVENTION METHODS PROVIDED WILL ALSO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO THESE DISEASES.

5. BIRDS ARE THE PRIMARY HOST OF WEST NILE VIRUS. DEAD BIRDS CAN BE AN INDICATION THAT WEST NILE VIRUS IS PRESENT IN YOUR AREA. IF YOU FIND A DEAD BIRD, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOR INFORMATION ON WHAT ACTION TO TAKE. YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS ALSO A SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR WEST NILE VIRUS DEVELOPMENTS AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES IN YOUR AREA. SEE [WWW.CDC.GOV/NCIDOD/DVBID/WESTNILE/INDEX.HTM](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/NCIDOD/DVBID/WESTNILE/INDEX.HTM) FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WEST NILE VIRUS.

6. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

7. RADM JOYCE M. JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SAFETY, SENDS.

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